



*Embassy of the United States of America
Bridgetown, Barbados*

Q: I am concerned because I have a close family member who migrated to the United States and I heard that having relatives in the United States will make it difficult to qualify for a visitor's visa. Since I also plan to visit friends and distant relatives while in the United States, is it better to put the immediate relative on my application or is it better to put down my friends and distant relatives?

A: It is always best to be open and honest about your purpose of travel. The consular officer who interviews you understands that it is normal for visitors from the eastern Caribbean to have friends, family, and even close relatives in the United States. U.S. visa law is complex, and having a close relative such as a parent or sibling living in the U.S. does not necessarily mean that you will not qualify for a visa. Many persons traveling to the United States from the eastern Caribbean have family they plan to visit. Sometimes people's plans or business will have them traveling to a different part of the country from where their close relatives live. Sometimes it is not convenient to see their close relatives and they choose instead to visit a friend or a distant cousin who has offered a place to stay. It is true that the consular officer who interviews you will be trying to determine your ties in the United States as well as your ties to your home country. A close relative in the United States who has petitioned for you to immigrate to the United States is indeed a strong tie away from your home country. However, the consular officer who interviews you will also understand that the legal process of immigrating to the United States is a long one and that many people have a legal, dual intention of visiting the United States while waiting for an immigrant visa process to legally be completed. If you conceal information during your interview, the officer may conclude you are not a legitimate traveler and may refuse your visa.

The bottom line is always the same – you are better off being clear and honest about your life situation and your travel plans during your interview at the U.S. Embassy. It is good to remember that the consular officers at the U.S. Embassy who interview visa applicants have a strong desire to facilitate entry into the United States for every legitimate traveler.

You can find more information about how apply for visas to the United States on our website, www.barbados.usembassy.gov and the website of our authorized service provider at <https://ais.usvisa-info.com>.

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